

Management of Forage Fish in Puget Sound and the Georgia Basin

Greg Bargmann, Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife*

Jack Schweigert, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Keywords: Pacific herring, fishery management, forage fish

Forage fish are important components of the Puget Sound and Georgia Basin systems, providing an important source of food to many organisms. Some species of forage fish, such as Pacific herring and surf smelt are sought by commercial or recreational fisheries while other species of forage fish, such as anchovy and sandlance, have little or no fishing pressure at present. Both Washington State and the Canadian government have developed management principles for forage fish with emphasis on Pacific herring, which is the most intensely fished species of forage fish in the region. In both areas, the management plans emphasize the highly variable nature of populations of forage fish and the need to maintain minimum levels of abundance.